



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

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E.O. 12958, as amended
June 19, 2008

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TO: The Secretary
THROUGH: C - Mr. Sonnenfeldt
FROM: EUR - Arthur A. Hartman

Yugoslav Contingency Study

The EUCOM contingency papers provide a limited analysis of possible US and Allied responses to Soviet moves against Yugoslavia. There are a number of conceptual gaps and questionable assumptions, and the presentation of Soviet objectives and possible Western actions is incomplete. A precis of the study, and our comments on major questions, follow. (You should know, parenthetically, that a cleared interagency contingency study on Yugoslavia was completed August 28, 1975, and is awaiting NSC consideration. This State-initiated study focuses on the possibility of domestic disintegration in post-Tito Yugoslavia, without external pressure, and then moves on to contingencies involving various forms of outside interference.)

Precis:

The EUCOM study assumes that a major objective of Soviet policy will be to bring post-Tito Yugoslavia under its control, and that the Soviets will be prepared to apply pressure and/or intervene as necessary to accomplish this. The scenarios considered include:

- Soviet diplomatic pressure and covert assistance to dissidents prior to Tito's departure;

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- Escalation of such pressures and assistance following Tito's death, including staging major maneuvers near Yugoslavia's borders;
- Limited intervention of up to ten divisions of Soviet and Warsaw Pact forces to support secessionist movements or parties in a civil war;
- Major Soviet and Warsaw Pact invasion, involving up to 36 divisions on two fronts.

For each of these contingencies, the study sketches a range of possible US and Allied responses, designed to deter the Soviets from escalating their pressure or intervention at any stage. Beginning with internal Alliance consultations and public statements of support for Yugoslav independence, these options run through limited economic and military equipment support, assistance for unconventional warfare, possible logistic and air support, naval demonstrations, return of US-dual based air and ground forces to Europe, the occupation of all or part of Austria by the US or NATO, and preparations for general European war. The relative advantages and disadvantages of each action are discussed in broad outline.

The study assumes that the Yugoslav Army would strongly resist a Soviet invasion, but would rapidly lose control of the major population centers. The campaign would then shift to unconventional warfare in the mountainous areas, under Yugoslavia's nation-in-arms concept, which would provide opportunities for US or Allied assistance to Yugoslav forces, but would not involve introduction of major US or Allied combat forces. In the event of a Soviet invasion, the study assumes that Hungary and Bulgaria would agree to participate and contribute forces, but that Romania probably would not participate.

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Soviet Objectives

We accept the paper's assumption that the Soviets have the long-term objective of bringing Yugoslavia back into their orbit. But we believe the paper over-emphasizes the probability of Soviet military intervention and underplays the possibilities for Soviet activities short of a major invasion.

In a number of places the study suggests an analogy with Czechoslovakia in 1968 or Hungary in 1956. However, the Yugoslav case differs in that, unlike Czechoslovakia and Hungary, Yugoslavia has not been under Soviet control.

Internal developments in Yugoslavia would be unlikely to pose a direct threat to the Soviet security system and a wide variety of Yugoslav succession outcomes would be acceptable or tolerable to Moscow. Also, the Soviets would have to calculate that the US and NATO might move to counter a thrust against Yugoslavia.

Soviet intervention in Yugoslavia would thus be a response to a perceived opportunity--rather than a defensive move to preserve the status quo as in the Czech and Hungarian crises. Intervention may be envisaged in a situation of internal disarray or conflict associated with the post-Tito transition. In these circumstances:

- the most probable manner of Soviet intervention would be limited assistance (materiel, technicians, "volunteers") to a party to internal strife in Yugoslavia.
- the possibilities for deterring Soviet intervention are good, since the Soviets would probably not be faced with a threat to their major strategic interests.

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- political change in post-Tito Yugoslavia will probably be relatively slow, giving the West time to react to possible Soviet troublemaking.

Western Options

We agree with the paper's basic approach of seeking to deter Soviet action through carefully tailored diplomatic and military moves. There are, however, a number of gaps in the consideration of possible Western options.

We need to consider means to make clear to the Soviets the price they would pay in their relations with us, the West Europeans, and the LDC's, if they moved to infringe Yugoslav sovereignty. We should develop a more comprehensive checklist of concrete steps which could be taken. This would include also consideration of Yugoslavia's economic ties with West Europe, and the situation of Yugoslav workers in Germany.

Discussion of US or Allied actions for support of unconventional warfare is well handled. We agree that this is the most likely contingency in the unlikely event the Yugoslav situation deteriorates.

There is no treatment of possible US or Allied options which could meet a major Soviet invasion. There should be some military analysis done of such contingencies ranging from air support to small unit operations to large scale counter invasion. The results of such analysis would be relevant in the event that support for unconventional warfare proved inadequate to resist a Soviet takeover. We would then be forced to reassess our role and objectives, and to decide whether Western interests in Yugoslav neutrality would warrant the political and military risks of major combat in Yugoslavia itself or general war in the event of large-scale Soviet intervention. Without serious contingency plans for the potential employment of forces in Yugoslavia, any maneuvering or shows of force would be easily seen as a bluff.

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An adequate analysis should consider in some detail the potential and risks of operations through Trieste, through Thessaloniki, and across the Adriatic, as well as possible air and naval support roles.

The only major Western military operation discussed in the study is the plan for the joint US-FRG occupation of Austria. This is designed to link the Italian and central fronts, and appears to be intended to provide the Allies with a bargaining chip with the Soviets and to be related more to a general war contingency. Without planning for operations beyond Austria into Yugoslavia itself, it would have little relevance to the situation in Yugoslavia. Moreover, it would be very divisive within NATO. In the event, the Soviets might use Western occupation of Western Austria as an excuse for their occupation of Eastern Austria.

The NATO Allies

The EUCOM paper contains little analysis of the views of NATO Allies, which would be crucial in any possible Yugoslav contingency. A fuller analysis would have to cover some of the following points:

-- Although the Allies have long recognized that a change in Yugoslavia's orientation would have a major impact on Western security and perceptions of the balance of power, they have been unclear and hesitant in considering what might be done to prevent such a shift. In the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, the NATO Foreign Ministers made a veiled reference to Yugoslavia (and Romania) in a communique, stating that "any Soviet intervention directly or indirectly affecting the situation in Europe or in the Mediterranean would create an international crisis with grave consequences." However, consultations on contingency planning lapsed as memories of 1968 receded into the past.

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-- Allied reactions would depend heavily on perceptions of the likelihood and strength of Yugoslav resistance to Soviet pressure/intervention, or on the possibility that any conflict could be confined to Yugoslavia. There would be less chance of gaining Allied support if Yugoslavia appeared likely to collapse quickly, or if Allied intervention promised a serious risk of broader war.

-- Even limited NATO action would require clear unity of purpose among the US, UK, FRG and France.

Two NATO Allies, Italy and Greece, border Yugoslavia, and their reactions will be particularly important in determining the ability of the US or NATO to mount contingency operations in support of Yugoslavia. Turkey, as a NATO Ally and a Balkan state, will also have to be taken into account.

-- In the Italian case, the EUCOM paper appears to assume that Italian facilities would be available to the US at will. We believe that, in practice, Italian reactions and willingness to become involved or allow US use of facilities in Italy will vary greatly depending on internal Italian developments (including governmental weakness, the strength and potentially ambiguous position of the PCI) and the situation in Yugoslavia, including the degree to which Soviet pressures on Yugoslavia seemed to directly threaten Italy.

-- The Greek reaction, which is not analyzed, could be affected by Greece's present delicate relationship with NATO and the US, traditional Greek interests in the Balkans--e.g., the continued Greek interest in promoting a "Balkan dialogue"--and concerns about the effect of possible involvement on its difficulties with Turkey. Similarly, the Turkish attitudes would reflect not only the threat of changes in the Balkans, but also the uncertainties of US-Turkish negotiations, and the potential Turkish reassessment of its relationship with NATO.

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The Eastern Europeans

The study assumes that the East Europeans, with the probable exception of Romania, will be reliable Soviet allies for moves against Yugoslavia. If faced with demonstrations of NATO's resolve in Central Europe, one or more of them (Hungary, for example) might well see an invasion of Yugoslavia as a reckless gamble. Their reliability must therefore remain in doubt. Moreover, the Romanians can hardly be expected to watch fellow "maverick" Yugoslavia succumb to Soviet tanks without seeing the implications for themselves. At the minimum, we see the uncertainty of the Romanian reaction as a complicating factor in Soviet planning. Also, we cannot agree that once Yugoslavia is taken Romania would be successfully pressured to return to good standing in the Socialist camp. While the Soviets may be expected to exert considerable pressure on Romania, and perhaps secure some temporary concessions from Bucharest, the present Romanian leadership is likely to continue pursuing its maverick foreign policy.

Finally, Albania will watch Soviet moves directed against Yugoslavia with immense anxiety and is likely to call upon the PRC for moral and military support, which could raise questions of the PRC reaction.

Conclusion:

In sum, as indicated by the above questions, we believe that the EUCOM contingency study requires considerably more analysis of both military and political questions before it can be of real assistance in policy planning with regard to Yugoslavia.